



Harper Center Bulletin

Harper Center Bulletin #241

December 1st, 2014

Williamstown Council
on Aging

December 2014 Newsletter

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So how do I always begin the December Newsletter? Of course you know! As of today, there are 23 shopping days left until...get going!

We'll be anticipating a change in the weather this month. Those warmer days simply could not last indefinitely so get ready. Do you know where your coats, gloves and hats are? How about the snow shovel? That could be handy. Here we go! Winter approaches!

And yes, I do know where my skis are. They're ready so bring the snow!

The Garden Club of Williamstown will be here at Harper on Monday December 1st to help folks create a new and definitely fresh holiday ornament to bring home and display. It's an annual gift from the club and isn't it fun! Don't you just love the smell of fresh pine in the house? I do; it really helps bring a sense of holiday to home and hearth! Join us at one o'clock on the first to make your own!

It feels like this year has flown doesn't it? Suddenly it's December. Remember though, snowy vistas are wonderful to look at. They don't last so enjoy them while they're here. Happy Holidays all!



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Ongoing collectibles

Back in October we held our annual warm coat collection day and twenty two people donated fifty warm coats, which is simply wonderful. A couple individuals who missed coat day asked if they could bring them in after the day, and at that moment we decided to keep the collection as an ongoing event and collect warm coats thru at least a large portion of the cold season. Guess what? Since collection day, we have collected an additional twenty two coats. Thank you all! Keep them coming! Oh, and while you're at it, we collect food for the local food bank too. We've a list of the most desperately needed sundries and food but we'll accept any good offering. Hunger and cold are relentless!

Jim Sisto



There are a lot of things to think about as we get along in years. Some of these revolve around our property and what we need to do to protect assets from loss. Oh-and what about that tiny issue of what we would do if we had a catastrophic event and couldn't communicate with anyone about what we want to happen to us? Those things are not really pleasant to think about, we all wish for long life and good health but you know that it isn't always so. There are all sorts of issues we need to consider before anything happens because we want our loved ones to be protected and we want our voices to be heard even if we can't speak. There are legal considerations revolving around what happens, it may be unfortunate, but alas true. On Tuesday December 2nd Attorney Jim Sisto will be here at the Harper Center to talk about all those important things-wills, estate planning-those necessary, should not be ignored nuances we know are out there begging attention. Jim is a certified Elder Law Attorney and many of you know him personally. He's been here before and he's a great resource, very knowledgeable and a pretty good speaker too. Join us! He'll be here at 12:30 on December 2, we'll offer a pizza nosh first, let us know if you're coming!

AARP Tax Aide

No, not yet. But it would be a good time to start gathering materials you'll need and may have on hand to get your 2014 state and federal income taxes ready. The season approaches and it's not too far away.

We'll begin to accept appointments next month so watch for the announcement.

In the meanwhile, if you're good with computers and like numbers, the AARP wouldn't mind talking to you about volunteering to help others get their taxes processed. We have a really great corps of volunteer tax aides but the more the merrier they say. Orientation and training are provided, support is readily and cheerfully available and meeting new people is guaranteed. Interested? Give AARP a call toll free 1.888.687.2277 or contact us here at Harper and we'll be more than happy to help you with contact numbers. Join us!



Responding to pandemics

Recently there has been a lot of conversation and some fear around the Ebola outbreak in Africa and whether we should do quarantines, or even allow people to enter the country. There was fear about the people who we did let in for medical care and concern that there were people, multiple people, on an aircraft who might've been exposed to something...fear. The instinct for self preservation is strong isn't it? But what do we do to prevent the spread of infectious maladies? What would a typical response be?

On December 16, Shawn Godfrey, General Manager of the Village Ambulance Company will visit Harper and tell us how a response would be handled locally if one were to erupt. We'll be grilling Burgers and Dogs at noon first and talking second at 12:30. This is the next to last cookout of the year...



Hoarding

So, tell me, what do we know about hoarding and what can we do about people who hoard? Do we even really know what hoarding is or do we just think we do? Are “collectors” hoarders? What’s the scoop?



I have seen definitions for hoarding which indicated that it’s simply persistent difficulty parting with one’s things—possessions—regardless of value. There are impacts upon family, friends, neighbors sometimes—we’ve seen the TV shows and know they are out there and we may even have concerns about someone. But—what’s the truth?

On Thursday afternoon, December 4th, James Ferry and Jill Lebar from Berkshire Care Solutions will be here at the Harper Center to talk about hoarding and present a program on the emotional, psychological, social, financial and even legal ramifications of the hoarding disorder. Elder Services

will be serving Chicken a la King for lunch earlier, you can join us and stay if you’d like. Stop by and join us for this very informative talk and let us know if you’re planning lunch on which will be at 11:30. It will be the regular Elder Services meal. We will serve snacks!

Holiday Parties

The Friendship Club Annual Christmas party will be held on Tuesday December 9 at Mingo’s in North Adams. You can talk with Pat or Maggie about the details or to arrange a place for a fun gathering.

We’ll be hosting a special edition of holiday bingo here at Harper on Tuesday December 23—we’ll be grilling brats and creating sandwiches with sautéed peppers and onions first-yum! Oh—there will not be bingo on Friday December 26th.

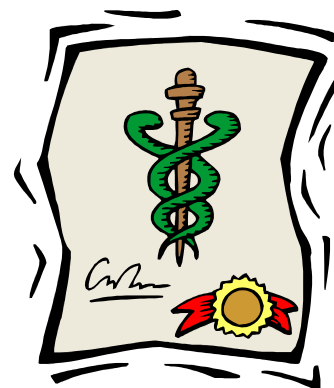
The annual Williamstown holiday Walk and Penny Social will be on Saturday December 6th. The Penny Social officially runs from 3:00 to 6:00 and the walk itself continues after dark with lots to see and do.

Should be fun eh?



Blue Cross/Blue Shield

One of our Thursday afternoon sessions in December will feature the outreach team from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts. They will be presenting a brief overview of how Medigap plans, Part D and Medicare Advantage plans work with Medicare. The presentation will help participants navigate the differences between Medigap and Medicare Advantage programs. Current members of Medex, Blue Medicare, Medicare HMO Blue are welcome and will have an opportunity to ask any questions about any 2015 changes. And— anyone is welcome regardless of insurance coverage. So—are you ready for the Medicare Annual Election Period? Stop by and find out. Thursday, December 11 at 1:00. Snacks? Yes!!!



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It's a bit early to do this but here goes; every year we ask for suggestions around programming options for the coming year and we have been pretty successful at scheduling most requests during the year. So people, what would you like to see us have for programs next year? The official categories are educational, social and recreational. Educational would be a speaker on a desired topic, social would be an event like Karyn's Teas, recreational is fun and games. Drop us a note, email us, tell us in person. We'll see what we can do!

While we're at it, the addition of brats to the food array here was a smashing success eh? We are more than happy to try new food ideas so add this to the above but remember-no liver!

Speaking of programs, our friend Kira, now of Sweetbrook will be at Harper on Thursday afternoon December 18th to lead her annual holiday decoration creation festival. Last year we made gingerbread houses with candy decorations which looked great when they were done and tasted as good going down. Wonder what she'll cook up this year?

Page four news and notes...

Serena Merrill, our foot care provider will be here at the Harper Center on Tuesday, December 16th to clip those toenails and rub those aching feet. That's the good news. The bad news is that there's one appointment left open for the month. She's accepting appointments for her next trip through town on January 20th, 2015. Want to see her? Schedule now folks, her spaces fill fast!

SHINE Counselor Peg Jenks will be here at the Harper Center on Wednesday, December 17th at 10:30 to help anyone who has issues with their health care insurance. Appointments are appreciated. Peg is also available for individual consultations at other times by scheduling her through the COA office at 458-8250.

The monthly Blood Pressure for December is cancelled and will resume in January 2015 on Tuesday January 13th right before the Friendship Club Meeting. Jessica wishes all a Happy Holiday Season!

Finally, the December Brown Bag offering—sponsored by our friends from the Foodbank of Western Massachusetts—will be on **MONDAY DECEMBER 22!** Please note the date change!. Brown Bag is a monthly offering of shelf stable foods and fruits and veggies in season. Interested in the details? Call us here at Harper, 458-8250 and we'll be happy to help!

